

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 7, 2006

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chairman
Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Collins:

We are writing to urge you to convene an oversight hearing to review the Department of Homeland Security's distribution of Urban Areas Security Initiatives Allocation (UASI) grants for fiscal year 2006.

As we are sure you are aware, last week the Department announced the recipients of UASI grants for this fiscal year. Many highly populated areas experienced substantial reductions in funding, and the affected communities are alarmed by the large fluctuations in awards compared to previous years' funding. For example, the targets of the 9/11 attacks, Washington, DC, and New York, NY, saw decreases in UASI funding by as much as 40 percent. Phoenix, AZ, saw the single largest decrease in funding of 61 percent despite it being the fifth largest city in the United States, one of the fastest growing cities in the nation, and the home of the 12th busiest airport in the world. Many observers have called into question the Department's decision to reduce funding for these and other largely populated cities. In light of these criticisms, it is appropriate and important for the Department to explain the process it uses to make its risk-based assessment to the satisfaction of Congress and, more importantly, the American people.

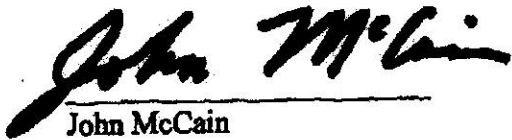
The distribution of FY 2006 UASI grants marks the first time the Department sought to award grants based on whether an area is at risk for a terror attack – an objective we strongly support. In fact, we believe *all* homeland security grants should be based on risk, as advocated by the Final Report of National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, which stated, "*Homeland security assistance should be based strictly on an assessment of risks and vulnerabilities.*" We have consistently supported legislation to fulfill the Commission's objectives in this regard and as such, we applaud the Department's decision to employ a risk assessment process.

It is incumbent on Congress to ensure that the Department's risk assessment factors are based on sound criteria so that the American public can be confident that security grants are

awarded in a manner that protects and secures our nation. Therefore, we encourage you to hold a hearing to review the Department's new risk assessment process and ensure it is meeting the goals and objectives of risk based awarding.

Thank you for your attention to our request.

Sincerely,


John McCain


Jon Kyl